



Use Week of:

Unit 15 • Session 3

Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Jeremiah

STORY POINT: Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How did God plan to fix what sin broke?
God planned to send Jesus.

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TEACH THE STORY
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
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LEADER Bible Study

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah the priest. He lived in Judah, just north of Jerusalem. At the time God called Jeremiah into ministry, Josiah was king of Judah.

As evidenced in the callings of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others, each time God calls someone, He equips that person to do His work. Like Moses, Jeremiah was hesitant: “Oh no, Lord GOD! Look, I don’t know how to speak since I am only a youth” (Jer. 1:6). God assured Jeremiah: “I will be with you” (Jer. 1:8).

God called Jeremiah to be a prophet. The people of Judah had broken the covenant God made with them at Mount Sinai. The terms of the covenant are found in Exodus 19. God said through Moses, “If you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, ... and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation” (vv. 5-6). God’s people responded, “We will do all that the LORD has spoken” (v. 8).

But Judah was deep in idol worship and other sins. God punished the unfaithfulness of Israel by sending the Northern Kingdom into exile. Now God’s judgment was coming for Judah, and Jeremiah’s job was to warn them.

Along with the warnings, Jeremiah brought a message of hope. Jeremiah told God’s people about a new and better covenant. He prophesied about a day when God would forgive sin and write His law on the hearts of His people. The new covenant promised that God would forgive sin. God forgives sin through His Son, Jesus. Jesus did not come to get rid of the law. (See Matt. 5:17.) Through His sinless life, Jesus fulfilled the demands of the old covenant. He changes our hearts and gives us power through His Spirit to obey His commands.

The BIBLE Story

Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah

Jeremiah

Jeremiah was a priest. One day, God told Jeremiah, “I knew you before I made you. Before you were born, I picked you to do very special things.” **God wanted Jeremiah to be a prophet.** Being a prophet was a big job. **Jeremiah would have to listen to God and tell people what God said.**

Jeremiah said, “Oh no, God! I am too young for this job. I am just a boy.”

“Do not be afraid,” said God.

“I will be with you, and I will take care of you.”

God’s message for the people of Judah had bad news: “I will punish the people because they have disobeyed Me.” But God’s message had good news too: “After the people are punished, I will help them. I will make them strong again.”

God’s people in Judah kept breaking His laws. This was bad news because **God had made a covenant, or agreement, with His people.** The agreement said that if **God’s people obeyed Him, God would bless them.** But the people did not obey, so **God would punish them for their sin.** The people would lose everything they had. They would even become servants of their enemies.



Jeremiah said that because of sin, people's hearts are tricky. People's hearts fool them into thinking they are very good when they are not. They trick people into wanting things or doing things that God does not want for them. But God had a plan to change people's hearts. God promised to make a new covenant—an even better agreement!

In the new covenant, God was going to put His law in their hearts. He would give the people power to obey Him. God said, "I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin."

Jeremiah spoke God's message, and his friend Baruch (BAY rook) wrote it on a scroll. When the king of Judah heard the message, he tore the scroll into pieces and burned them up in a fire.

God told Jeremiah to make another scroll just like the first. Jeremiah told the king, "God is going to punish you, your family, and your leaders for doing wrong things. God warned you, but you did not listen."

Bible Storytelling Tips

• Write on a scroll:

Ask another leader to act as Baruch and write on a scroll as you describe God's message for the people as Jeremiah.

• Tell a monologue:

Invite an adult leader to dress in Bible times clothing and tell the Bible story as a monologue from Jeremiah's perspective.

Christ Connection: Jeremiah said that God was going to forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin when we trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah

BIBLE PASSAGE: Jeremiah

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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.

Welcome time

- "Come, Thou Fount"
song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related
to the Bible story
theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "What Comes Next?"
activity page, 1 per
child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to look at the pattern in each row and circle what comes next.

SAY • All of these pictures have something to do with our Bible story today. A prophet named Jeremiah had to listen to God and tell people what He said. God's message had sad news and happy news. The happy news was about Jesus and people's hearts. We'll learn more soon!

LOW PREP

- paper
- crayons or markers

Draw your plan

Ask the children to think about what jobs they would like to do when they grow up. Encourage children to draw a picture of themselves doing one of those jobs. Invite preschoolers to share their self-portraits and what they hope to do with the rest of the group.

SAY • Those are great plans! Did you know that God has a plan for you, too? God made you and has a special job for you to do. In our Bible story today, God told a priest named Jeremiah that he would be a prophet. God chose Jeremiah to do this special job before he was even born!

Sort foods

Provide a variety of toy food, empty food boxes, and two baskets. Invite preschoolers to place foods they like in one basket and foods they do not like in the other basket. When all the food is sorted, dump the food out of the baskets again and help children sort food by healthy or not healthy. Comment on the differences between what children like and what is healthy.

- toy food
- empty food boxes
- baskets, 2

SAY • A lot of us want to eat foods that are not good for us, and we don't want to eat foods that are good for us. We will learn in our Bible story today that our hearts trick us into wanting things that are not good for us because of sin. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.***

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Say "God knew you before you were born" to each child as the children move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Jeremiah in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story comes from the Book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament. All of the Bible is God's Word. Today's Bible story is about a message that God wanted Jeremiah to give to His people.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jeremiah, Prophet to Judah" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • **Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant,** or agreement. Jeremiah said that God was going to forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin when we trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 2 Chronicles 7:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Print the key passage on a heart cutout; then cut it into pieces. Invite the children to reassemble the puzzle and then repeat the key passage together.

SAY • Jeremiah told the people God was going to forgive their sin and change their hearts. Our key passage reminds us that when we turn to God, He will forgive and heal us.

Sing the key passage song, “If My People,” and the theme song, “Come, Thou Fount.”

- red construction paper
- scissors (adult use)
- marker
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “If My People” song
- “Come, Thou Fount” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Sin has broken our hearts and tricked us into wanting things that are not good. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.*** Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Direct children to stand and face one direction. Tell them to pretend they are walking and see something scary up ahead. Lead them to turn and face the opposite direction when you say *turn*. Then show the “Eagles Team Photo.”

SAY • When we turn from sin and follow Jesus, we are going the best way. The coaches in the 10:12 football ministry in Baltimore tell the teenagers that following Jesus is the best way to live.

- “Eagles Team Photo” printable

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

• Bible

Suggested
messages:

- Jesus loves you!
- You matter to God!
- God made you!
- God sent Jesus!
- Jesus died for our sin.
- God gives us power to obey.

Practice preaching

Lead children to sit on the floor. Choose one child to be the speaker by saying, “I choose [*child’s name*] to share a very special message.” If the child does not wish to participate, you may encourage him by saying “Do not be afraid. I will be with you,” but do not force him to speak. Give the child a Bible and invite him to stand in front of the group. Sit on the floor facing the speaker and whisper a message for him to repeat to the group. Then choose another speaker and message.

SAY • God chose Jeremiah to tell people God’s message.

Jeremiah thought he was too young to be a prophet, but God said, “Do not be afraid. I will be with you, and I will take care of you.” **Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant.** Jeremiah said that God was going to forgive sin and change people’s hearts. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him. Now all of us get to share this very special message with others, even if we are young!

Match jobs

Print the “Special Jobs” printable and cut apart the cards. Lay the cards in a grid pattern, faceup for younger

- “Special Jobs” printable
- scissors (adult use)

preschoolers or facedown for older preschoolers. Encourage preschoolers to take turns turning over two cards at a time to find a match. If the cards are not a match, turn them back over and allow the next preschooler a turn. Play until all the matches have been revealed. Talk about the jobs represented on the cards as preschoolers play.

SAY • There are many kinds of special jobs. God gave Jeremiah a special job. God wanted Jeremiah to be a prophet. Jeremiah had to listen to God and tell people what God said. **Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant.** God was going to forgive sin and change people's hearts. Jesus made these words come true. God forgives our sin when we trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sin. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him.

Change people's hearts

Cut out rough heart shapes from gray paper. Assign one child to be *it*. Tape a gray heart to every other child's back. Explain that when you say "go," *it* will try to remove each child's paper heart. After a few minutes, assign a new *it* to try to tag everyone with a red heart sticker.

SAY • Jeremiah said that because of sin, people's hearts fool them into wanting things or doing things that God does not want for them. They are like these gray paper hearts. But **Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant:** God had a plan to change people's hearts! God wants to take away our ugly, sinful hearts and give us new and better hearts that love Him and want good things. Jesus changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him.

- gray paper
- scissors (adult use)
- tape
- red heart stickers

Tip: Play this game in a large open area or outside, if weather permits. Follow your church's security procedures for leaving the classroom.

Make a heart pouch

- paper
- markers
- felt
- scissors (adult use)
- hole punch
- yarn

Print the key passage on a strip of paper. Cut heart shapes out of felt and punch holes around the bottom edges. Wrap the ends of long strands of yarn with tape. Give each preschooler two hearts with the holes aligned and a strand of yarn. Show preschoolers how to lace through the holes, leaving the top of the heart pouch open with extra yarn on each side. Tie the ends together to make a strap. Allow children to decorate their heart pouches with markers. Help each child put his key passage strip inside his heart.

SAY • Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant.

In the new covenant, God was going to put His law in people's hearts. That means God helps us want to obey His rules. Jesus made these words come true. He changes us and gives us power through His Spirit to obey Him. We can use our heart pouch to remind us of God's Word and His promise to help us!



Practice like a team

- "Eagles Team Photo" printable
- sports cones (optional)
- painter's tape (optional)

Show preschoolers the "Eagles Team Photo." Remind children that this football team in Baltimore is learning to follow Jesus. Tell preschoolers that they will pretend to practice like a football team, and you will pretend to be their coach. Lead preschoolers in exercises and football drills such as high knees, jumping jacks, fast feet, dropping to the ground, stepping around cones, or moving through a painter's tape "ladder" on the floor.

SAY • Coach Sean leads his football team to be better players, but more importantly to know about Jesus. He tells Jordan and the rest of the team how God forgives our sin when we trust in His Son, Jesus.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve cheese slices and pretzel sticks for snack. Invite preschoolers to “write” with the pretzel sticks on the cheese slice, then roll up the cheese like a scroll before eating. Talk about how **Jeremiah told about a new and better covenant**, and Baruch wrote God’s words on a scroll.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. True or false? Before God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, he was a priest. (*true*)
2. What does a prophet do? (*listens to God and tells people what God said*)
3. What bad news did Jeremiah tell the people? (*God would punish them for disobeying.*)
4. What good news did Jeremiah tell the people? (*God would forgive them and give them power to obey.*)
5. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? God planned to send Jesus.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- cheese slices (optional)
- pretzel sticks (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “If My People” song
- “Come, Thou Fount” song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers